

## Thomas Jefferson to Congress, January 11, 1802, from Thomas Jefferson and the National Capital. Edited by Saul K. Padover.

### Jefferson Message to Congress THE PRESIDENT TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*January 11, 1802*

I now communicate to you a memorial of the Commissioners of the City of Washington, together with a letter of later date, which, with the memorial of January 28, 1801, will possess the Legislature fully of the state of the public interests and of those of the City of Washington confided to them. The moneys now due, and soon to become due, to the State of Maryland, on the loan guaranteed by the United States, call for an early attention. The lots in the city which are chargeable with the payment of these moneys are deemed not only equal to the indemnification of the public, but to insure a considerable surplus to the city, to be employed for its improvement; provided they are offered for sale only in sufficient numbers to meet the existing demand. But the act of 1796 requires that they shall be positively sold in such numbers as shall be necessary for the punctual payment of the loans. Nine thousand dollars of interest are lately become due; three thousand dollars quarter-yearly will continue to become due; and fifty thousand dollars, an additional loan, are reimbursable on the first day of November next. These sums would require sales so far beyond the actual demand of the market, that it is apprehended that the whole property may be thereby sacrificed, the public security destroyed, and the residuary interest of the city entirely lost. Under these circumstances I have thought it my duty, before I proceed to direct a rigorous execution of the law, to submit the subject to the consideration of the Legislature. Whether the public interest will be better secured in the end, and that of the city saved, by offering sales commensurate only to the demand at market, and advancing

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from the Treasury, in the first instance, what these may prove deficient, to be replaced by subsequent sales, rests for the determination of the Legislature. If indulgence for the funds can be admitted, they will probably form a resource of great and permanent value; and their embarrassments have been produced only by overstrained exertions to provide accommodations for the Government of the Union.

[P. 100, DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF . . . THE CAPITOL . . .]